



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, Washington 98101-3140

January 20, 2009

Reply to
Attn Of: ETPA - 088

Ref.: 06-081-BOR

David Kaumheimer, Environmental Programs Manager
Upper Columbia Area Office
Bureau of Reclamation
1917 Marsh Road, Yakima, WA 98901

Dear Mr. Kaumheimer:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the proposed **Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study** (CEQ No. 20080534) in Washington State in accordance with our authorities under Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. Section 4332(2)(C), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. Section 7609.

In our comments on the draft EIS in April 2008, EPA expressed environmental objections to the proposed Black Rock Alternative because of potential impacts to groundwater, and subsequent migration of radiological and chemical contaminants to the Columbia River, and a lack of effective mitigation measures. EPA's concerns about the Wymer Dam and Reservoir and Wymer Dam Plus Yakima River Pump Exchange alternatives were the potential adverse effects on wetlands, riparian areas, water quality, and habitat. EPA recommended additional evaluation of the seepage impacts, as well as further examination of proposed State Alternatives, which may help to increase water availability with minimal environmental effects.

The final EIS further evaluates seepage impacts and selects the No Action Alternative as the Preferred Alternative. EPA supports this selection. Our primary concerns have been addressed. EPA believes that success in water supply and use in the Yakima River Basin will depend on continued cooperation and engagement of federal agencies, the State of Washington, local tribes and communities, and other interested stakeholders in Yakima River Basin.

If you have questions about our comments, please feel free to contact Theo Mbabaliye at (206) 553-6322, or me at (206) 553-1601.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit

cc: Yakama Nation
Washington State Department of Ecology
Department of Energy at Hanford